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• THE BRITISH WORKERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

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• THE STEEL ISSUE: AN EDITORIAL

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WASHINGTON WIRE

IT WAS that amiable philosopher, Mr. Dooley, who observed that if the US government really wants to control the giants of Big Business it should go get itself incorporated under the laws of the state of Delaware. Lacking this, the contest between government and Big Business seems at best a wavering struggle.

President Truman scored one victory, however. The arrogant US Steel Corporation, which often acts as though it were the government and the Administration just a minority stockholder, suddenly discovered that it had gone too far in resisting Truman's fact-finding strike-truce proposal. The Corporation struck a haughty pose of superior rectitude when Truman proposed it, and demanded that he invoke the Taft-Hartley injunction procedure at once.

The chorus of editorial denunciation that would have fallen on a trade union that rejected a Presidential truce in a threatened strike can be imagined. US Steel, obviously feeling that the journalistic double standard would protect it, swelled its chest and looked noble. The *New York Times* promptly jumped to defend Big Steel, demanding in its turn that T-H be invoked. (This insistence on T-H, incidentally, is significant. Labor has always considered it a hostile weapon and the eagerness with which its name is invoked by industry in critical times seems to support the idea.)

Big Steel's difficulty was that it had adopted an impossible position; it was too raw even for the rest of the industry. The often gallant *New York Herald Tribune* denounced its stand. Independent steel companies agreed to the truce proposal. Big Steel, called the "bellwether," found itself leading nobody but the *New York Times* and similarly conservative journals. Whether this means that some other industry will now become the testing

ground for the fourth-round wage demands remains to be seen.

The long, dull debate on the Atlantic Pact had one effect—of recalling Taft's isolationism just when he was in process of being made a hero by conservative friends, in preparation for reelection in Ohio next year. You can't get around it, Taft is trying to lead the GOP back to old-fashioned nationalism. We always get pleasure out of life's little ironies and relish the pat on the shoulder Taft got from the *Daily Worker* for his efforts.

The mood in Congress on international affairs is sour, disillusioned, discouraged. Obviously the Marshall Plan by itself isn't going to pull Europe out of its fiscal hole. With the bloom off the boom at home, it takes more will power than ever to combat the listlessness and apathy toward foreign aid and recovery that fills many congressmen. One frequently hears the ironic comment that "Russia isn't cooperating," referring to the fact that the Soviets have heretofore helped put over almost every big Administration step in foreign affairs by taking some aggressive action that hiked the Congressional blood pressure enough to ensure the legislation's passage.

Senator McCarran (D, Nev.) is one man who has really come into his own in the 81st Congress. We view him with increasing awe. His point of vantage is the chairmanship of the Judiciary Committee, with a secondary position on the Appropriations Committee.

Almost alone McCarran has blocked the displaced-persons bill. He obtained the 10-percent committee cut in Marshall Plan aid. He led the bullying inquisition of Secretary Acheson. He inserted the \$50 million item for Franco Spain in the ECA bill. Now his hand itches to turn his Judiciary



Committee into a witch-hunt. He is somebody to watch.

A lot of Protestants seem to be plain sore over the Catholic attack on the Barden federal-aid-to-education bill and it is showing up in letters to congressmen. It is too hot a subject for most editorial pages to handle, but the charge of Cardinal Spellman that Representative Barden (D, N. C.) is a "bigot" seems to have rankled as have few other recent public remarks. Barden takes a position, apparently borne out by the Constitution, that taxpayers' money should not be used to support parochial schools of any faith. The late Al Smith took the same position. Recently Representative Jacobs (D, Ind.), himself a Catholic, supported Barden's stand before a Knights of Columbus meeting in Indianapolis. Federal aid to Southern schools is desperately needed. Yet the bill is now seriously endangered. One of the most fascinating American social studies is furnished by the way the passive, long-suffering majority is blocked and thwarted on such subjects largely because of the theory that it is better not to discuss them in public.

Notes. It is important to know that careful economists throughout the government generally believe no big-scale depression lies ahead. . . . Proposals by GOP Representatives Nixon (Calif.) and Velde (Ill.), members of the Un-American Activities Committee, to "investigate" Judge Kaufman of the Hiss-Chambers case fizzled out like a damp match. . . . A new GOP-Dixiecrat combination threatens a major Administration proposal—a trial run for the Brannan farm plan. . . . Hard-boiled Defense Secretary Johnson is making violent enemies but is moving ahead on unification and economy plans for the armed services with Truman's unqualified backing. . . . The utility lobbies have been able to delay the confirmation in the Senate Commerce Committee of Leland S. Olds to the Federal Power Commission, and of John Carson, another strong liberal, to the Federal Trade Commission.

Washington

T. R. B.

CORRESPONDENCE

Baby Talk

SIR: We are frequently told that most Europeans consider Americans children in political matters. There is some justification for that opinion, as the record in both foreign and domestic affairs will show. Listening to the President on the radio the other night, it occurred to me that our so-called liberal leaders must blame themselves, in large measure, for the average American's social and political barbarism. Truman addressed the people somewhat in the way an embarrassed father explains the facts of life to his small son, repeatedly hinting that the world is full of designing females eager to inflict some vague horrors upon him, but never precisely defining the horrors or identifying the harpies in such a way that the boy would ever recognize them in time to save himself.

On six separate occasions the leader of a movement, calling itself the Fair Deal and purporting to be a modern, progressive political party, referred to the domestic enemies of progress as "selfish interests." The President suggested that he and the country were beset by dangerous enemies, but the only ones he ever mentioned precisely were the Communists, concerning whom the public could scarcely need any more warnings. He never referred to the fascists, who also must bear some blame for our distressing international problems. The only way he identified those who would turn back the clock in domestic affairs was as "selfish interests."

By selfish interests did he mean Hearst, whose press preaches a medieval social policy? If so, why doesn't he clarify the matter for the millions of people who never see magazines like the *New Republic* and must get their guidance from the venal, lying press that dominates the newspaper industry in so many communities? By selfish interests perhaps he meant the corporations whose profit margin is so great that they could easily afford simultaneous price cuts and wage raises and thus set in motion a truly stupendous business boom, but who prefer short-range profits to long-term welfare. By selfish interests did he also mean the real-estate lobby and its lackeys in Congress? If he did have in mind the members of the anti-housing conspiracy, why didn't he hold them up in such a way that the people could see who they are?

It can't be that the President and his advisers refuse to name names and speak clearly because they don't know the

facts. It must be that they, like so many Europeans, feel that little Johnny American is still a small boy. I'm not sure they're right. But I *am* sure that Johnny never will grow up if teacher doesn't talk plain English.

New York City

WALTER GRIFFIN

The Anglo-American Crisis

SIR: Michael Straight's "America and the British Crisis" (the NR, July 18) suggests, but does not adequately develop, the point that our aid-to-Britain program has never been sold to the American people as anything but a stop-Communism tactic. It is high time we faced the fact that the root of Britain's trouble today is linked to our own domestic dilemma: US economic activity must function at a high enough level to buy the goods that our industries produce, and must at the same time buy some of the goods that England—and other countries—have to sell us. If we aren't prepared to do that, ECA was doomed before it started.

And if—as we seem to be doing—we are unable to absorb the production of our own labor force, two things will happen. One is that Britain will need our doled-out help even more than in the past. And second, the climate of opinion in this country will swerve back toward economic isolationism—will clamor for budget balancing and taking care of our own unemployed before helping Europe. It is of such stuff that our post-World War I mood was made.

New York City

PETER ANTHONY

Senator Hickenlooper's Record

SIR: I should appreciate it if you could give me information about the recent voting record of Senator Bourke Hickenlooper of Iowa.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

LENNY MIRTO

[Senator Hickenlooper voted on the liberal side only three times out of 15 recorded in the latest *New Republic* Congressional chart. He voted against admitting Jewish displaced persons, against extending the reciprocal trade agreements, against portal-to-portal pay, in favor of the Taft-Hartley Act, against the anti-inflation amendment, against reviving the excess-profits tax, in favor of overriding the President's tax-cut veto, in favor of exempting railroads from the anti-trust laws, in favor of weakening rent control, against public housing, against expanding social security and against funds for a steam-electric plant for the TVA.

On the liberal side, he voted for maintaining Marshall Plan funds, for federal aid to education and against segregation in the schools. —THE EDITORS]



THE REAL ISSUE IN STEEL

THERE WILL BE pensions and a wage increase for steelworkers this year—or there will be a strike. The issue between the United Steelworkers (CIO) and Big Steel, led by the US Steel Corporation, is exactly what it was before the companies grudgingly agreed to President Truman's proposal of a 60-day truce while a fact-finding board investigates the case.

The threat of a strike in steel arose in the first place because the companies refused to accept the workers' idea of what is required to sustain a decent standard of living. From the facts, it is hard to see how an impartial board can deny the need for a raise in steel wages. Should the President's board recommend increases which the industry rejects, the union no doubt will go ahead with its strike. If that happens, the general public can, in good conscience, support the union to the full.

Today the lack of adequate consumer purchasing power is depressing business generally. Higher wages would lift buying power. The steel industry, perhaps more easily than any other, is able to grant sizable wage increases and still enjoy large profits operating at even a moderate level of production. The steel worker has not benefited in pay in proportion to the increase in his output over the last ten years, and he has lagged behind other manufacturing workers in postwar increases in his real wages.

Robert R. Nathan has collected the basic data in a study of the "Economic Condition of the Steel Industry, 1949":

☛ The last ten years have brought the physical and financial resources of the steel industry to record level.

☛ Production costs have declined and steel prices have risen since the war.

☛ Steel profits after taxes have increased far more than in most industries in the postwar period—the profits of all manufacturing corporations almost doubled between 1946 and the last quarter of 1948, but steel profits increased three and a half times. Profits of most industries have fallen this year, but the steel industry will show a new record of profits for the first six months of 1949, and materials costs are still dropping.

☛ Productivity per man-hour has risen 50 percent in

the last ten years, but the buying power of the steelworkers' pay has increased only one-seventh during that time. Real hourly earnings in steel rose only 14 percent in that period, while the return to investors increased 165 percent.

☛ Under June, 1949, price and cost conditions, the "break-even point" in the steel industry is now at roughly one-third of capacity operation. (The industry was still operating at 75 percent of capacity after heavy cutbacks last month.) If it granted a 20-cent-per-hour wage increase, the industry's break-even point would still be comfortably low—less than 45 percent of capacity production:

The level of profits under June 1949 prices and costs is so high that substantial wage increases make only a minor dent in the profit structure of the steel industry and the US Steel Corporation—a 20-cent-per-hour wage increase with operations at 90 percent of capacity would reduce the industry's profits by about one-fifth, but still leave the industry with \$785 million after taxes, which represents a 16 percent return on investment and is more than double wartime earnings and 25 percent more than was earned in 1948.

A fourth round of wage increases is in order. And the steel industry is a proper place to begin. If there ever was a time when wages could be increased with no need for a consequent rise in prices, this is it.

Instead of considering the equity of the case, however, the major steel producers chose to play politics with the fourth-round issue. First, US Steel set up the Taft-Hartley Act as a straw man, declaring that it would not join in any settlement "outside Taft-Hartley," and dropped the subterfuge only when Truman publicly forced the companies' hand: "Surely you are not afraid to have your side of this dispute examined in the public interest?" the President wired the hold-outs.

Truman made the companies back down and successfully avoided the political play they tried against him. The steel operators invoked the Taft-Hartley Act because they wanted to force Truman to use the injunction he has opposed so bitterly. They tried in every way to sabotage a settlement outside Taft-Hartley in order

to deprive the President of a chance to prove his contention that T H is not needed to settle strikes. The sour way in which the steel companies are approaching the fact-finding process, after being forced into it, does not encourage hope for industrial peace.

The method which the President is following in this case is a sound one. The theory that injunctions settle anything is long since exploded; in this case, obviously, injunction would merely postpone the crisis. The use of Taft-Hartley would not solve the basic issues:

❊ No one has denied labor's thesis that workers' weekly incomes are dropping faster than prices.

❊ Steel cannot establish its "inability to pay" by mumbling about "general economic conditions."

Whether the economy is better served at this critical stage by increasing the flow of money in wages to consumers or in savings to investors is rightly a question for the public to decide. What the President's fact-finding board will recommend deserves the full and fair consideration of both parties. A peaceful settlement in steel could prevent a wave of costly strikes throughout industry this year. The American people have a right to expect social responsibility from both labor and industrial leaders at so crucial a time.

THE WEEK

A QUESTION OF TIME

President Truman has now sternly warned his Congressional leaders that they must obtain approval of a military-aid program for Europe before this session can end. Senator Taft's opposition to the North Atlantic Security Pact gave unexpected heart to treaty opponents. Nose-counting on the military-aid issue indicates so close a division in the Senate that Secretary of State Acheson has called on the President for help.

Isolationist sentiment is growing in Congress in direct ratio to mounting fears of depression and unemployment. Congressmen who have gone along with Administration calls for foreign appropriations in the past are thinking twice about voting \$1.45 billion for a European military program when large sums may soon be needed to keep Americans at work at home.

There can be no doubt that the President is finally determined to convince key members of Congress, as Acheson has completely convinced him, that American prestige abroad cannot stand the blow it would receive if the aid program is defeated. But the success of the Administration's drive depends largely on time. Appropriations for ECA and reenactment of the Reciprocal Trade Act are still on the calendar. Traditionally, it is the House which cuts foreign appropriations. This year it was the Senate that cut

10 percent from the total allocation for ECA and voted to squander \$50 million of the sum allowed on Franco Spain. At least part of the cut must be restored in conference and the Spanish item eliminated completely to satisfy the Administration. The reciprocal-trade program, which can be of more practical use in coping with the world economic crisis this next year than any other tool at our command, has been shoved aside repeatedly, first for the labor bill, and now for the Pact and the military-aid program.

Time is important in this matter. There is talk of considering the legislation in joint sessions of the House and Senate Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees to speed up the process, as has been done on special occasions in the past, *e. g.*, the original authorization of the Marshall Plan. Even so, it might be three weeks or more after committee work finally starts before a definite bill can be cleared for floor action.

By that time, the protection of American prestige in Europe may depend on how badly congressmen want to get away for at least a short vacation.

MIDDLE-INCOME HOUSING

With the Housing Act of 1949 now on the books to provide slum clearance and public housing for low-income families, Administration leaders in

Congress are pushing the second half of President Truman's housing promise—relief for the middle-income group. More than 46 percent of the families in this country who earn between \$2,500 and \$5,000 a year are trapped between the high-cost housing provided by private industry and the public housing developments open only to those who earn less than \$2,500. Senator John Sparkman (D, Ala.) has introduced a comprehensive bill, now being considered by the Senate Banking and Currency Committee, to spur the construction of homes for this group.

By amending the present Housing Act and extending certain parts of the Federal Housing Administration's authority for 12 months, the measure would provide for \$1 billion in direct loans to housing coöperatives and other non-profit housing corporations. It would give special loans to veterans and authorize 40-year loans at 2.5-percent interest to educational institutions for building dormitories and other housing.

The most important provision to make good housing available to middle and lower-income families is extension of the government's guarantee of certain types of home loans through the Federal National Mortgage Association. Banks, swamped with home-building loans for veterans and others, have lately been increasingly unwilling to take on such risks under a partial

guarantee only. Sparkman's bill guarantees 95 percent on loans for homes for the middle-income group and 100 percent on loans for certain types of veterans' construction. The 95-percent loan applies to two-bedroom homes costing not more than \$6,650, three-bedroom houses costing up to \$7,600, and four-bedroom homes up to \$8,550.

COLLEGES AND FREE SPEECH

The academic world is deeply troubled, and somewhat confused, on the question of radicalism among college teachers, which is discussed by Professor Henry Steele Commager on page 10 of this issue. A few days ago, 3,000 delegates to the convention of the National Education Association at Boston voted almost unanimously, and in a crusading spirit, that Communists should not be permitted to teach. Yet at the same meeting strong opposition to loyalty oaths was expressed by the Academic Freedom Committee of the NEA, and by the Department of Classroom Teachers, with 350,000 members.

A few days later, the American Association of University Professors declared, contrary to the NEA's position, that Communists should be permitted to teach as long as the Communist Party is legal. At the same time, it recommended dismissal of any teacher who "should advocate the forcible overthrow of the government or should incite others to do so [or] should use his classes as a forum for communism or otherwise abuse his relationship with his students for that purpose [or] if his thinking should show more than normal bias or be so uncritical as to evidence professional unfitness."

The committee said in general that the AAUP "regards any attempt to subject teachers to civic limitations not imposed upon other citizens as a threat against the academic profession and against the society which the profession serves."

Meanwhile the AAUP notes six cases in which college teachers have been dismissed, not because of any charge of Communism, but for supporting Henry Wallace's Presidential

candidacy on the Progressive Party ticket. Five of these cases are not very clear-cut, since they represent failure to reappoint individuals on probationary status; but in the case of Professor George F. Parker, fired from Evansville College, Evansville, Indiana, there is no possible doubt. Professor Parker had been at the college three years, his work as a teacher was admittedly satisfactory, and it is clear that he was dismissed solely for his political views. Papers behind the Iron Curtain, please don't copy.

COMPETITION FOR AT&T

The American Telephone and Telegraph monopoly, which has tossed only the crumbs of its service to farmers, may finally have some competition. The House has passed a bill, introduced by Representative Bob Poage (D, Tex.), which allows the Rural Electrification Administration to

make long-term loans to private companies and coöperatives to build and extend telephone facilities in rural areas.

Because of the deterioration of farmer-owned mutual systems and the growing monopoly of AT&T, only about 40 percent of farm homes today enjoy telephone service. Rural telephones dropped from 2,498,493 in 1920 to 1,526,959 in 1940. Under the bill, the sparsely populated, unprofitable areas can now be served at a low interest rate of two percent, the same amount now charged on REA loans for electric lines.

Administration forces in the House succeeded in defeating several AT&T-inspired amendments before the bill was finally passed, 282 to 110. Representative John McMillan (D, S. C.) offered an amendment prohibiting loans in areas where existing companies prove willing and able to provide service within "a reasonable period



of time." This would have delayed the program and enabled AT&T to skim the cream off unserved rural areas; passage was urged in letters from AT&T to congressmen. It was defeated 92 to 34. Another amendment, defeated by a voice vote, would have given the utility-dominated state regulatory boards the right to pass on new telephone service in the areas. Representatives Leo Allen (R, Ill.) and Clarence Brown (R, Ohio) tried unsuccessfully to hike the interest rate from two percent to three percent, which would have placed the cost of servicing the thinly populated areas too high.

The Poage bill now goes to the Senate, where a companion measure, introduced by Senator Lister Hill (D, Ala.), has been pending in the Agriculture Committee. Passage is likely, if committee chairman Elmer Thomas (D, Okla.) agrees to hold hearings so that the bill may be reported to the floor.

THE CELLER COMMITTEE

The Administration's anti-monopoly drive, slow to begin, shows promise of effective action by the end of the 81st Congress. A special House subcommittee, headed by Representative Emanuel Celler (D, N. Y.), has opened an investigation into the need for stronger anti-trust laws. Before recommending new legislation, the committee intends to study the 130 laws dealing with monopoly that have been passed since 1890.

Attorney General Tom Clark, first witness before the committee, pointed out that monopoly power, within the meaning of the anti-trust laws, is the ability to impose unreasonable restraints on competition. "Monopoly may be bigness," he said, "but bigness to be unlawful must include the power to determine prices without substantial regard to those pressures which normally affect price in a competitive market; artificially to allocate and limit production; to divide markets and fields of production; and to exclude competitors."

Monopoly power today seldom

shows up in the form of one huge corporation dominating an entire industry. Instead, it is to be found in those industries controlled by a few large companies—the Big Three's or the Big Four's.

During the last 10 years, the anti-trust laws have proved to be the only method of maintaining competition in the nation's economy. Since 1940, 508 anti-trust cases have been filed, compared to 479 actions during the first 50 years. Currently, the Justice Department is proceeding actively to break up the aluminum monopoly, open the channels of trade in the shoe-machinery industry, break up the combines and integrations found in the movie industry and divorce AT&T from Western Electric. It has suits pending against major investment-banking firms and the meat packers.

Yet, in the Celler committee hearings, both Attorney General Clark and John D. Clark, a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, expressed concern over the rapid growth of monopoly in spite of governmental efforts and the trend of legislation to exempt big business from anti-trust laws. To provide better tools for dealing with economic concentration the committee has indicated that it will consider:

❑ Repeal of the Reed-Bulwinkle Act, which gave the railroads the right to fix their own freight rates.

❑ Repeal of the Webb-Pomerene Act, which permits exporters to make agreements in restraint of competition.

❑ Repeal of the Tydings Act, which amended the Sherman Act to authorize state laws permitting manufacturers to fix retail price "floors" below which goods may not be sold.

❑ Tighten Section 7 of the Clayton Act to prevent one firm from acquiring another's physical assets where the result would be to lessen competition substantially.

❑ Increase anti-trust fines from a top of \$5,000 to \$10,000 for each count and authorize treble damage suits against firms from which the government purchases supplies when they violate the anti-trust laws.

OUTSIDE AMERICA

Moscow's men in Western Europe—the official Communist Party spokesmen and the editors and writers of the fellow-traveling newspapers—have been treating the Anglo-American duel with unusual self-restraint. Apparently there have been orders from the Kremlin: keep carefully on the sidelines; don't gloat; don't trot out the "I told you so" and the "inner contradictions of the capitalist system"; let the Americans do the anti-American propaganda by their own high-handed methods and by their explanations that don't explain; let the Americans throw away the backlog of good will that billions of American taxpayers' dollars and huge quantities of honest American generosity have built up.

This the American officials have been doing in recent weeks with remarkable success, with far greater success than "The Voice of America" ever had with pro-American propaganda. No period of similar length since the start of the West-East cold war has been quite as fruitful (and at so little cost and effort to the Kremlin) for the fulfillment of Moscow's psychological purposes in Western Europe as the one since the Paris meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers confirmed the Armistice of the Giants.

Not many Western Europeans understand the technical issues involved in the duel between Washington's aggressive dollar diplomacy and London's survivalist sterling nationalism. This is not only because the technicalities are beyond the grasp of all but the experts, but also because the Western Europeans take it for granted that the real issue is political. There are few men in positions of authority who don't admit at least

privately that John Snyder and Sir Stafford Cripps are locked in combat between the State Department and the Foreign Office. Every newspaper in Western Europe stresses the political aspect of the financial controversy; and no person or paper, regardless of the political viewpoint for which he or it speaks, fails to give some role, small or large, to the American recession as a major political factor in the present crisis.

Yet America's leading officials have kept on shouting into this storm of comment words not calculated to have a calming effect; President Truman, Secretary of State Acheson, Snyder and others have said (at the top of their lungs) that there really isn't any noisy storm, there isn't any recession in the United States, there's no crisis in Anglo-American relations. British official hypocrisy of the great years, of the years of show-the-flag, never went quite so far; nor did German ineptitude in the years when French diplomacy awaited *la gaffe allemande*. American officials aren't as skillful as the British were at this game; they don't know when and how to keep their mouths shut and, as a result, the Soviets have been able to hold their tongues and await *la gaffe Américaine*.

Thanks to official US statements (that recall Thomas Lamont's charming remark about a little distress-selling on Wall Street's Black Thursday), Western Europeans have come to untechnical (and, in some ways, untrue) conclusions. It seems plain to them that the West-East cold war had to be temporarily suspended and a partial *modus vivendi* worked out between Washington and Moscow because Washington felt it had urgent work to do closer to home than the Kremlin. This work was the task of staging a kind of economic blitz or putsch or purge in order to remove a threat on the American flanks (in Western Europe and South America) and on the American rear (in Asia and Africa). The threat came from London, not Moscow; the British had to be forced into conformity within

an American political *Weltanschauung*.

Few Western Europeans had much confidence that the truce between the United States and Russia would last indefinitely; those who had some hopes two months ago don't have them now. The general opinion both on the Left and on the Right is that something more serious than a cold war will start after the Americans have removed (or failed to remove) the threats on the flanks and the rear of their world *apparatus*; the Americans are trying to get their house in order before sallying out to pull down the Muscovite house that now has an Asiatic wing. And America's house now seems to the Europeans to be the whole non-Soviet world. When Argentina's fascist Colonel Juan Peron and Britain's socialist Sir Stafford Cripps make common cause against the American bankers' men on Capitol Hill and in the cabinet, talk of *diktats* made in America begins to come both from the Right and from the Left. There are complaints that the United States is trying to treat Western Europe as it does South America—as a protectorate.

There is even uglier talk going the rounds in Paris and Rome: for example, an analogy between America's conduct in 1949 and Germany's in 1941. This comment (which is being spread in Italy by the neo-Fascist MSI—Italian Social Movement) is that the Germans in 1941 held up their "final" attack on the British in order to settle scores first with the Soviet Union; and that the Americans now are preparing for the "final" onslaught on the Soviets by smashing the British Empire. The distortion and exaggeration explicit in such comments must be seen in the light of the fact that Western Europeans have been so fed on such propagandistic extremities during the cold war that they haven't been able to recapture the clarity and judgment lost during the psychological conflict that accompanied World War II.

Many Western Europeans who have little sympathy with socialism (British or any other variety) might be more tempted to accept the American view

that political freedom and economic prosperity depend on American-type capitalistic free enterprise if they didn't notice the skeleton in the American cupboard—the recession. They might be more sympathetic to the American proposals for Western European economic salvation if the official denials of the existence of the skeleton didn't suggest fraud, deception and a quality of desperation.

These denials tend to give the lie to all of America's protestations of honesty; they create the impression that while the Soviets lie, the Americans don't tell the truth. Facts must be pretty bad if they can't be faced. Hence, a great deal of anti-American sentiment, latent during the period when its expression was taken as pro-Sovietism, has been coming out into the open. Above all, the illusion widely held in some circles in the United States that because the Western Europeans didn't like the Soviet way of life they *did* yearn for the American way is being attacked. For example, the conservative London *Economist* writes:

The intensely competitive American system has produced . . . the highest standard of living, the greatest technical achievements, the most invincible military and naval power, the highest level of athletic achievement, and for that matter the best-looking girls and the finest babies, that the world has ever seen. . . . But it has undeniably produced in addition a larger crop of stomach ulcers, psychoses, neuroses, suicides, divorces and miscellaneous and highly colored crime than in less competitive countries.

The London *New Statesman and Nation* writes:

The simple fact is that—Marshall Aid or no Marshall Aid—Britain as a long-term policy must buy her food and raw materials from countries that need her goods—and that means outside North America. If this is now to be regarded as an infringement of the principles of Marshall Aid, those principles will have to be revised or Marshall Aid shut down.

Which of course is what Soviet Russia has wanted all along.

PERCY WINNER

RED-BAITING IN THE COLLEGES

by Henry Steele Commager

THIS BOOK¹ is the formal record of the University of Washington tenure cases that have attracted nationwide attention. It is not, of course, the full record: some four thousand pages of testimony remain to be examined by the American Association of University Professors Committee on Academic Freedom. What this little volume provides are the charges against the six suspect professors, the majority, concurring, and minority opinions of the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom, and the statement and recommendations of President Raymond B. Allen.

It is important first to make clear the facts about these tenure cases. In 1947 the legislature of Washington enacted a law that no salary should be paid to any state employee who is a member of an organization that advocates the overthrow of the government of the United States by force or violence. The Communist Party was not specifically named in this act, nor is that party outlawed by the law of the state. That same year the Washington legislature set up a committee on un-American activities, charged it to inquire into the subversive activities of individuals and organizations in the state, and instructed it to give special attention to Communist Party activities that might affect the functioning of any state agency or educational institution. In accordance with these instructions the so-called Canwell Committee held hearings on Communism in the state university. Following these hearings, complaints were filed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences against six members of the university faculty—three of them alleged to be present, and three past, members of the Communist Party.

The Faculty Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom—a committee whose authority seems to be a bit vague—held its own hearings on these complaints and made a series of reports and recommendations. A majority of the faculty committee advised against dismissal or other disciplinary measures in five of the six cases. President Allen did not feel himself bound in any way by the findings or recommendations of this committee. He recommended the dismissal of three members of his faculty and the probation of three others. The regents of the state university accepted the recommendations of President Allen.

¹ *Communism and Academic Freedom. The Record of the Tenure Cases at the University of Washington, including the Findings of the Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom and the President's Recommendations* (The University of Washington Press: \$1.50).

It is proper to say, before we turn to a more particular examination of the findings of the faculty committee and the action of the president, that the university authorities appear to have observed the most scrupulous regard for the rights of the accused teachers. They were given an opportunity to appear, to testify on their own behalf, to confront witnesses, to bring in their own witnesses at the university's expense. Both the faculty committee and the president limited their inquiry to the single question of the relation of present or past membership in the Communist Party to competence in teaching and in scholarship. And though President Allen repudiated the recommendations of his committee, he appears to have made an effort to be fair and impartial, to protect the welfare of the university and—by his own lights—academic freedom.

Space does not permit a detailed analysis of the various documents we have here, illuminating as that might be. Nor does it permit an extended consideration of the larger issues involved in this whole question of Communism and academic tenure. The issue, as presented and debated, is a fairly simple one.

First, it is clear that, legally, the state can establish its own criteria of appointment and tenure for state-supported institutions. This may be foolish, but a state has the right to act foolishly. In all probability government violates constitutional guarantees of due process if it brands an individual as subversive or disloyal without giving him a fair trial; the procedures adopted by the regents and the president of the University of Washington appear to have satisfied the requirements of due process, and are, from that point of view, unexceptionable.

Second, it is clear that nothing in the law of the state, or in the tenure provisions of the university, makes either past or present membership in the Communist Party an offense. Nor did the president or the regents contend that such membership was a violation of law or of regulation. What they did contend was, rather, that membership in the Communist Party is in itself evidence of unfitness and incompetence, and that concealment of such membership makes the original offense doubly heinous. Thus President Allen reported of the three members recommended for dismissal that "it has been adequately proved . . . that they are incompetent . . . intellectually dishonest, and . . . have neglected their duties as members of the faculty."

With respect to concealment of membership—an offense charged against the three dismissed professors—it is appropriate to note the position of the AAUP Committee: "Lying and subterfuge with reference to political affiliation are in themselves evidence of unfitness for the academic profession." This position is persuasive enough. Yet it raises an awkward question, or perhaps a series of questions. If mere membership in the Communist Party is justification for dismissal, there is a premium on concealment. And there is a further question, relevant as long as the Communist Party is a legal one. Could state or university authorities require teachers to reveal membership in the Democratic or Republican Parties, or punish with dismissal the failure to reveal such membership?

It was primarily on the grounds of subterfuge and refusal to cooperate that a majority of the faculty committee recommended the dismissal of Professor Gundlach. Those considerations were not prominent in the cases of Professors Butterworth and Phillips. The committee recommended that no action be taken against these two men; the president recommended their dismissal on the ground of incompetence, as proved by membership in the Communist Party. Here, then, we have a clear-cut issue.

What did the faculty committee say about this issue?

It said, first, that while membership in the CP was regrettable, it was not in itself cause for dismissal as long as the party itself was a legal one and neither the state nor the university administration had specifically made such membership cause for dismissal from a teaching post. It said, second, that there was no independent evidence that Professors Phillips and Butterworth were incompetent, or had neglected their academic duties, or that their political views had improperly colored their teaching. Of Professor Phillips, who taught philosophy, the committee observed:

Although he does have occasion to discuss Marxian philosophy in his teaching, it appears that his practice is to warn his students of his bias and to request that they evaluate his lectures in light of that fact.

Three members of the faculty committee dissented from these findings of the majority. Two of them said that

active membership in the C. P. is an overt act of such reckless, uncritical and intemperate partisanship as to be inimical to and incompatible with the highest traditions of academic freedom and responsible scholarship.

A third filed a separate opinion chiefly remarkable for its invitation to extreme governmental controls.

Public education institutions [writes Professor Williams]

are instruments created by legislation at the behest of the public on the assumption that they will perform their public functions in terms of the spirit, philosophy, and under the general climate of ideas acceptable to the government of the people who create, patronize, and support them.

This doctrine, of course, would justify Catholic control of the school systems in Massachusetts, Mormon control in Utah, Fundamentalist control in Alabama.

President Allen's forthright position is that on account of membership in the Communist Party Professors Butterworth and Phillips each

brought contumely and disrepute upon the University of Washington; his behavior has been bad; he has neglected his duty; he has been dishonest and incompetent; he cannot render efficient and competent service; and he has demonstrated his professional unfitness to remain as a member of the University faculty.

Now what is the difference between the view of the faculty committee and of President Allen? It is a difference of method that involves, or symbolizes, a difference of philosophy. The committee subscribes to the inductive and pragmatic method; President Allen to the deductive and the *a priori*. The committee looks to the facts, the president looks to the theory. The committee is unwilling to deduce unfitness from the generalization of membership in the Communist Party; the president first establishes his premise that membership in the Communist Party is *a priori* evidence of unfitness, and then concludes that all members of that party are, of necessity, unfit. The committee's method is that of the scientific investigator; the president's is that of the doctrinaire. It is not wholly facetious to add that the committee's method is one we have come to think of as characteristically American, the president's as un-American.

We may readily grant that membership in the Communist Party is presumptive evidence of a lack of critical acumen; we may go further and concede that such membership, logically, disqualifies a teacher as an impartial student. But American law rejects the doctrine of guilt by association and the equally dangerous doctrine of guilt by intention, and experience confirms the legal position. If membership in the Communist Party—or in any other organization—does paralyze the critical sense or produce bad teaching or worthless scholarship, it should not be difficult to prove this. But

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neither the dean who filed the charges nor the president who sustained them submits such evidence.

"Hard cases," Justice Holmes once wrote, "make bad law." It is in a sense unfortunate that general principles must be invoked in connection with specific cases, for our judgment tends to be clouded by the specific case. This problem arises whenever censorship is invoked against a worthless book or the third degree is used on some prisoner who is palpably guilty. The issue here is not, we must remember, the jobs of Professors Butterworth and Phillips. It is not even that question now commonly put: Do Communists have a right to teach in our colleges, or to work in our laboratories, at public expense? Concentration on the particular case of the two Washington professors will distract us. Concentration on the broader question—do Communists have a right to teach?—will mislead us.

✓ **What is** the real question? The real question is this: Is it wise or expedient or advantageous to investigate subversive activities in colleges and universities and laboratories? What are the advantages, what the costs, of such investigations? What does society stand to gain by tracking down and driving out a few "subversives" in colleges and universities; what price does it pay for this gain?

In every college faculty, in every church, in every labor organization, in every large corporation, there will be a certain number of incompetents. There will be a small number who are intellectually dishonest. There will be some who have violated laws or who are still violating laws. There will be, perhaps, a very small number of Communists, fellow travelers and fascists. The numbers involved in this final group are, apparently, negligible: the most careful investigation at the University of Washington turned up three Communists out of a faculty of some seven hundred.

With an appropriate expenditure of time, energy and money, society can ferret out these undesirables and dismiss them. This may be a gain. It is not nearly so great a gain as is commonly supposed. No instance has yet been produced where a Communist on a university faculty actually did harm to students or to scientific truth. The assumption that a Communist will fatally mislead students is based on the quite unexplored assumption that college students are such nincompoops that they are unable to distinguish between truth and falsehood, between impartial teaching and propaganda, and on the further misconception that they invariably believe all that their teachers tell them.

But we can cheerfully grant that Communists are not desirable as teachers in colleges and universities. It by no means follows that it pays us to hunt them down

and drive them out. We do not yet know what advantage follows from an investigation such as that which we are here considering. It is very much to be hoped that, in the interests of scholarship and public welfare, the University of Washington will investigate this matter for us in a year or two. Will it then appear that competent scholars are more eager to join its faculty than they have been in the past? Will parents breathe more easily, now that they know that the faculty has been purged? Will students come to the campus more gladly, and will their learning and morals show an improvement? Will the faculty be in a better position to do its job of teaching and research?

What, on the other hand, is the cost of such an investigation as that at the University of Washington? What is the actual cost in time taken from the proper business of teaching and study and research and administration? What is the cost in time devoted by President Allen and Dean Lauer, by the regents and by the faculty committee? What is the effect on the faculty and on the student body? Will professors be as free in the future as they have been in the past to explore dangerous ideas, to embark upon original research, to associate with non-conformists? Will students be as free as in the past to discuss whatever interests them, to join whatever organizations appeal to them, to test their intellectual muscles on controversial issues?

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the most complete and extreme freedom of inquiry in our universities. That freedom may be abused, but it is so important for society that society should cheerfully put up with the abuse. Freedom of inquiry may lead some scholars down labyrinthine ways; the alternative is conformity, and conformity makes, inevitably, for mediocrity. It was Whitelaw Reid—surely no radical—speaking back in the 1880's, who said:

As for the scholar, the laws of his intellectual development may be trusted to fix his place. Free thought is necessarily aggressive and critical. The scholar, like the healthy, red-blooded young man, is an inherent, an organic, an inevitable radical. It is his business to reverse the epigram of Emerson, and put the best men and the best causes together. And so we may set down, as a . . . function of the American scholar in politics, an intellectual leadership of the radicals.

Nothing, in our own day, is more impressive, or more sobering than the widespread fear of false ideas—chiefly Communist ideas—that has gripped the American people. It is, we must conclude, evidence of deep-seated insecurity. It is evidence of lack of faith in the intelligence and integrity of the American people,

lack of confidence in the validity of the American political and economic system. Surely those who are confident of the superiority of their own way of life should not fear competition, in the realm of ideas, from other systems or philosophies.

At this juncture in our history, when freedom of inquiry and freedom of expression are assailed from every side, it is well to recall two familiar but never hackneyed observations of the late Justice Holmes:

Every idea is an incitement. It offers itself for belief, and, if believed, it is acted on unless some other idea outweighs it. . . . The only difference between the expression of an opinion and an incitement . . . is the speaker's en-

thusiasm for the result. Eloquence may set fire to reason. . . . If, in the long run, the beliefs expressed in proletarian dictatorship are destined to be accepted by the dominant forces of the community, the only meaning of free speech is that they should be given their chance and have their way.

And, again:

Our Constitution . . . is an experiment, as all life is an experiment. Every year if not every day we have to wager our salvation upon some prophecy based upon imperfect knowledge. While that experiment is part of our system, I think that we should be eternally vigilant against attempts to check the expression of opinions that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death. . . .

BRITISH WORKERS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

by David C. Williams

LONDON

BBRITISH TRADE UNIONISTS have been watching with interest and sympathy the struggles of American workers against the Taft-Hartley Act. They are aware that the British trade-union movement is also going through a trying period of transition. But the problems in Britain and America differ almost as completely as the political positions of the two labor movements—the one holding power, the other largely limited to protest and agitation.

In many respects, British unions carry on just as if the Labour Party had never come to power. They are as determined as ever to restrict government intervention in labor-management relations. There is no National Labor Relations Board and little desire for one; most unions take pride in relying on their own power to force recognition by the employers. Even the proposal of a minimum-wage law is rejected each year by landslide majorities in the Trades Union Congress.

Large-scale government intervention is in fact tolerated, but only on a "temporary" basis. Thus, arbitration of industrial disputes is virtually compulsory, under wartime regulations which are continued from year to year with the approval of the Trades Union Congress. Small and weak unions actually prefer these regulations, since they can obtain concessions from the employers which they are not strong enough to get by striking. Coal miners and farm laborers are still frozen to their respective occupations, although they can shift

freely from job to job within them, and in 1947, the government was given the power to direct workers to essential industries. The Trades Union Congress approves these measures; it is naturally eager for the Labour Government to succeed in its economic plans and is unlikely to seek the removal of manpower controls while government leaders consider them essential.

Many familiar features of the postwar American industrial scene are missing here. There have been few nationwide strikes. Such strikes as do occur are mostly local, "wildcat" affairs, and their total effect is irritating rather than significant. There is relatively little interest in the closed shop, the dues checkoff and the other union-security devices so valued by American labor. Here again the prewar patterns continue. British labor has for many years tended to avoid strikes; the stronger the interest it took in political action to obtain its objectives, the more it became accustomed to weigh carefully the effect of strikes upon public opinion. While interest in the closed shop is increasing, most workers feel that trade-union membership should be voluntary, in order to keep the organizations democratic and officers responsive to the rank and file.

Behind this unchanging façade, however, the whole basis of traditional industrial relations is shifting. Trade unionists, long uneasily aware of this, were brought face to face with the new realities by Sir Stafford Cripps's budget speech, warning that no improvement in standards of living could be expected from wage boosts or further redistribution of the national income.

Some of the most threatening disputes have been in

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the nationalized industries. The biggest railroad union demanded a substantial wage boost from British Railways. A number of claims have been pressed on the National Coal Board, one of which—that concerning miners' free coal—caused widespread walkouts. In neither case are there profits—or even a surplus—out of which these raises could be paid. Nor can they be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices: railroad passenger and freight rates are up so far that a further boost would simply cut the patronage of the railways instead of raising their income. In the case of coal, so good a friend of Britain as the Ambassador of socialist Sweden has recently complained that prices are already "very high." This is all the more serious because there will soon be severe competition on the international market from coal produced by the low-wage Polish mines.

So far, of course, British workers have not done at all badly. In the past twelve months, average weekly wages have risen slightly more than the government's newly revised cost-of-living index, and workers have gained the advantages of a National Health Service, paid for out of taxes, and a greatly expanded social-security program. But, quite naturally, they want to keep moving forward, and the only way forward, Herbert Morrison says, is by means of higher production. Here, if on no other point, British Labourites and Eastern European Communists are in agreement. The agreement is not accidental. Both British Labourites and Eastern European Communists are guiding their countries away from laissez-faire capitalism, in which the persistent problem is underconsumption. In their very different ways, they are seeking to establish economies of planned full employment; they are finding, as did the Russians a generation ago, that adequate production is the most stubborn problem they face.

In Eastern Europe, the Communists have reversed the functions of trade unions almost overnight. They have fired officials who could not see their duty as getting greater efficiency and higher output but persisted in thinking of higher wages and shorter hours. Regardless of reader interest, or lack of it, they have filled the newspapers with stories of production quotas set and excelled. But even with all the leverage totalitarian power gives them, it is not an easy job, particularly where there is some tradition of Western-style "wages and hours" trade-unionism.

British Labour leaders, confirmed democrats, must go about the job in a different way, using education and persuasion instead of compulsion. Both the Government and the Trades Union Congress have sought to bring home to the workers the fact that higher pro-

duction means economic independence and improved standards of living. To concentrate the attention of its active leaders on productivity, the Trades Union Congress has arranged special conferences on the subject, thus forestalling excursions into the more attractive field of wages and prices. The Anglo-American Productivity Council, which issues reports and arranges inspection tours of American factories for British workers, contributes its share. All these measures are gradually building up in the minds of the workers the idea of the "new role" of trade unions—a constructive rather than a defensive one, higher wages through the expansion rather than the restriction of output.

All this is fiercely opposed by the small but energetic minority of Communists in British unions. In contrast to their activities in Eastern Europe, they appear in Britain as the firmest defenders of old customs. They will have nothing to do with all these new-fangled ideas and hoist the traditional "higher wages" banner. What was good strategy for past generations of workers, they say—and they go back as far as the sixteenth century for precedents—is good enough now. In times of full employment, the workers should press for everything they can get, so that they can hang on for dear life when slack periods come.

Here they touch a tender point in the memories of most British workers. They have not forgotten the mass unemployment between the wars, and few are quite convinced that it will not come again. Recession talk in America, mounting unemployment in Germany, France, Italy and Belgium—all these arouse old fears, even though unemployment in Britain itself continues to be negligible. In addition to these economic hazards, there are political ones. Reverses in the recent county and municipal elections, though their significance has been exaggerated in the American press, do indicate that it is possible for Labour to lose the next national election. One father recently refused his daughter permission to marry: he was afraid the Tories would come back and bring with them bad times which would cost her young man his job!

So British unionists feel that they must move carefully, retaining many of their old defenses at the same time that they risk assuming new duties and responsibilities. If Labour does win the next national election, the unions will be in the mood for bold experiment and there are likely to be many changes in their functions. In spite of their present drab standard of living, few would change places with American workers. They feel that at least they are on the right road, no matter how much farther they have to go, and they fear their American friends have yet to find the right way ahead.

HAROLD L. ICKES: Youth and Talent Wasted

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE have much to think about now that a jury has found Judith Coplon guilty of taking government documents to be turned over to an agent of Russia, and another jury has heard Henry Julian Wadleigh admit that, for a period in his life, he was engaged in supplying the American Communist Party with classified information to which he had access as a trusted government employee.

These two instances of disloyalty have tended to obscure the trial before Federal Judge Harold R. Medina in New York of eleven Communists on a charge of conspiracy to overthrow the government by force and violence. In that case, New York City Councilman Benjamin J. Davis Jr. testified that, in defending Angelo Herndon in Atlanta in 1933, he "had to familiarize [himself] with many of the Communist books and they made sense to [him]."

Davis holds an A. B. degree from Amherst College, where he played on the football team for three years and where his tuition fees were reduced because of high grades. He also has a Harvard Law School degree. Miss Coplon was an honor student at Barnard College, and Julian Wadleigh was educated at Oxford, the London School of Economics, the University of Kiel (Germany) and the University of Chicago. His father, an Episcopalian minister, was rector of the American church in Florence during much of Wadleigh's youth. All three—Davis, Wadleigh, Coplon—held high scholastic rank. All three enjoyed an economic status that was satisfactory considering all of the circumstances. All three, making due allowances for the racial prejudice that undoubtedly was felt by Davis, and perhaps by Miss Coplon, had an assured position in their country; all three, as educated Americans, must have known how favorably American institutions compared with those of Russia. And yet all three have been charged with betraying their loyalty to these institutions.

American laws and mores are not perfect. We realize that Americans, to a greater degree than many other peoples who claim to be civilized, are inclined to be scornful and impatient of any strange custom, social development or racial difference. However, it is beyond my comprehension how any American citizen, notwithstanding the occasional imperfections that still abide in our system, can tolerate, even for a second, the notion that life would be happier and more satisfying if there were imposed upon us such an oppressive dictatorship as exists in Russia.

It might be that if I were a Negro, as are Davis, and Paul Robeson, who has boldly declared his admiration of the Soviet system, I might react to Ku Kluxism and the brutality of segregation as they have. And yet both men might well consider whether, under Communism, they could have reached the heights that they have scaled in America which, after all, is giving Negroes an increasing measure of respect, along with the legal rights that are theirs. I believe that in time both of these men will see in better perspective what Communism has to offer in comparison with the ever growing acceptance by the American people generally of a man on the basis of his worth, regardless of race, color, creed or origin. If such men as these would make a careful appraisal of the position of the Negro in this country today, as compared with 25 years ago, they would have to admit that the recognition of the Negro as a human being has made enormous strides.

There undoubtedly has been a lamentable backsliding into anti-Semitism in the United States. Nevertheless, the Jewish strain has come to be not only accepted but appreciated in America. Our arts and sciences, as well as our literature, owe to the Jew an immeasurable debt. The liberal political aspirations that have pushed America constantly forward would greatly lag, and perhaps even stop altogether, if it were not for far-seeing and devoted American Jews.

Wadleigh, a white Protestant, belongs to the dominant group in American life, the group that has always governed the country and reaped its richest rewards. Yet he finds himself today in the position of attempting to explain, through the facilities of a metropolitan newspaper, how he came to engage in Communist activities to the damage of a nation which has provided him with a climate in which he might develop politically, economically and spiritually to a degree that would not be possible under Communist institutions that are just as oppressive as those of a Hitler or a Franco.

The jury in the Coplon case, consisting of six whites and six Negroes, and comprising women as well as men, has vindicated our system of justice. If guilty, Judith Coplon deserves the sentence that the court imposed upon her. Coplon and Davis and Wadleigh—what a shameful waste their histories reveal of youth and talent and ability. Fortunately, the heart of America, despite transient hysterical fears, is sound.

HAROLD L. ICKES

A COMMUNICATION: Sympathy for Tito

ROME

by Ignazio Silone

SIR: Neither the Socialist Parties of Western Europe nor the democratic groups akin to them have yet been able to formulate or to implement a policy of their own toward the countries of Eastern Europe. In this, as in everything else, they have adopted the same timid, incoherent and fatalistic attitude that characterized the old ruling class of their respective countries.

In view of this, it would be hard to imagine anything more ambiguous or more painful than the arraignments periodically addressed by Western Socialists to the countries of Eastern Europe. How can these countries possibly be reproached for their annexation to the Soviet zone of influence, with all its consequences? Is the predicament of their own choosing? Did the Big Three consult them about their future when it was being settled for them at Yalta and Potsdam? And did the Socialist Parties of the West, or the democratic groups akin to them, ever protest against these agreements that disposed of entire peoples as though they were herds of cattle? Did they ever demand that the agreements be rescinded? Not only did they never do so, but from the very first, in the European Socialist conferences held immediately after the end of the war, they explicitly confirmed their validity.

With these precedents, the administering of solemn reprimands to the countries of Eastern Europe is like talking of halters in the family of a man who has been hanged.

Until a short time ago all the protests and recriminations of the Socialists concerning the suppression of democracy in Eastern Europe might still have served as a call to the democratic and labor forces of Europe to mediate in the conflict between the two great powers. But this meaning has been

quite lost now that the Socialists, who were the most ardent supporters of this mediatory function, have passed to the opposite camp.

There is still, in our relationships with the countries of Eastern Europe, a Socialist theme. The economic and social structure of these countries has, as everyone knows, undergone a radical upheaval; the major forms of private property, in banks, industry, agriculture and commerce, have been abolished. And for Socialists, even for democratic and freedom-loving Socialists, these are not matters of indifference. What is it that makes them withhold their unconditional approval?

In these countries, the revolution was carried out by Communist methods; the regimes born of that revolution are strongly tyrannical, military and bureaucratic in character, and remote from even the most embryonic Socialist democracy.

To all this, Western Socialism opposes its sacred and indivisible binomial: social justice and political liberty.

Quite so. Far be it from me to raise objections to this sacred and indivisible binomial. But for the moment, unfortunately, it sounds well, and that's all. It sounds extremely well at meetings and in toasts at banquets. It is a dogma, an act of faith, an ideal for us all.

But it is not a historical reality.

We could speak far more effectively to the workers of Eastern Europe if only we could say: "Look and learn! We too have broken the power of capitalist monopoly, and we have done it without sacrificing a single fundamental liberty!" The Eastern Europeans are scarcely to blame if these words have, just now, such a sarcastic ring. The bitter truth is that democratic Socialism is still, unfortunately, indebted to its rivals and adversaries for the historical demonstration that its goals are attainable. And if, despite this,

we remain faithful to our ideal and persist in calling ourselves democratic Socialists, it is because we know that one can never accept defeat before the end of a struggle, which, in this case, may last as long as we live.

But when all is said and done, our position of criticism toward the countries of Eastern Europe cannot be the same as that of the financiers, industrialists and landowners who have been expropriated there. It is in their ranks, as we all know, that the most zealous advocates of the third "preventive" war are being at present recruited. They are endeavoring to identify the cause of the recovery of their lost property with the cause of Western democracy. And they are finding complaisant allies among those people for whom any challenge to the existing social order in the Western countries or in the colonies is synonymous with a further extension of the Soviet sphere of influence.

It is all the more urgent, therefore, that Socialists and liberals should define their own position clearly. For when Socialists work for a future reintegration of the countries of Eastern Europe into the European community they visualize it as entailing the political democratization of these countries, but on no account do they envisage the restoration of an outworn social system. They will join the workers of the countries concerned in struggling to prevent its return.

Tito's present condition of diplomatic isolation imposes a grave duty on democrats and Socialists. The economic aid which Yugoslavia is forced to solicit from the West must not serve to reestablish capitalism in any form, whether open or disguised, in that country. It is our duty, as Socialists and as democrats, to defend the independence of a people that, more than any other, bled itself white in the war of liberation, and that has been the first to tear up the imperialist agreements of Yalta and Potsdam.

Ignazio Silone, noted Italian writer, was a Communist during the 1920's and has been active as a Socialist since 1941. Because of his hostility to Fascism, he lived in exile in Switzerland for some years, while Mussolini was in power.

BOOKS IN REVIEW

TIPTOEING AROUND CLASS

CCLASS STRATIFICATION is the most awkward fact in our American society. It renders democracy impossible, but without it capitalism is impossible. Basic to any effective analysis of class is the recognition that it is fundamentally a dynamic power relation penetrating all the social relations of the society; that it is the necessary social concomitant of capitalist economic relations; that its influence is transmitted

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SOCIAL CLASSES, by Richard Centers (The Princeton University Press; \$3.50).

at birth to each succeeding generation; that, while the rigidity and associated coerciveness of class differ at any given time from nation to nation, depending upon the ratio of people to resources and the degree of development of capitalism, class is essentially the same thing and operates in the same direction in every capitalist society; that the rigidity and coerciveness of class social relations increase as monopoly increases in the economy; and that, as a power relation, it never relaxes its grip save as a superior power forces it to do so.

It is not surprising that liberal democracy tries to dodge the fact of class; that our schools and colleges ignore it in their curricula; that business propaganda tells us it is not relevant to our society, and that the social sciences tiptoe evasively around the problem. The latter have tended to concentrate on such polar concepts as the culturally conditioned individual personality and, at the other extreme, the total community and "national character structure." At the intermediate level of manifest social cleavages, neutral social concepts like "status" and "role" and "attitudes" are preferred to a frank approach to class.

Richard Centers' interesting study is a case in point. He dodges the fact

by Robert S. Lynd

of objective class membership based squarely on occupation and resulting wealth, and he defines class subjectively: "a man's class is a part of his ego," "it is an entirely subjective kind of membership," "classes are psychosocial groups." This enables him to bypass the objective power relations of class, to see class struggle as a cloud as yet little larger than a man's hand, and to apologize for paying so much attention to class-consciousness.

His data were gathered by weaving a class questionnaire into a Gallup-type poll by the Office of Public Opinion Research in Princeton covering a national sample of 1,100 adult white males. This has condemned him largely to typical poll answers, with no subtlety of penetration into the respondents' views; and to the characteristic biases of poll interviews, especially unfortunate for a study of class, whereby middle-class interviewers tend to select too many respondents of their own class and too few of the poor, and also to restrict the expression of workers' radical views more than would working-class interviewers. To use the lingo of the research fraternity, Centers has "correlated hell out of his data," exhausting all their potentialities and even in some cases stretching their interpretation beyond the point of safe inference.

Starting from the assumption that "a class is no more nor less than what people collectively think it is," Centers asked each respondent which class he thought he belonged to, and, then, which of a list of broad occupations should be placed in his same class. The eleven occupational categories contained such possible confusions as "small business owners and operators" and "store and factory managers"; and "factory workers" and "laborers such

as miners, truck-drivers, and *shop-workers*" (italics mine). There was no control over whether respondents viewed these categories in terms of national standards (e.g., of "bigness" in business) or in terms of the range visible in one's own town.

The self-rating as to class membership yields 3 percent upper, 43 middle, and 52 working class—revealing the skewing in the optimistic direction characteristic of self-ratings. The following percentages of the self-allocated middle-class respondents placed the indicated occupations in the middle class: 40 percent: "doctors and lawyers"; 63: "store and factory managers"; 81: "small business owners and operators"; 24: "factory workers"; 8: "servants"; etc. These are data—on something or other, including how erratic quick-shot verbal responses about class can be. Eighty-one percent of the farmers who placed themselves in the middle class placed all farmers in the middle class, while 38 percent of urban people who put themselves in the middle class placed farmers there. An indication of popular ignorance about class? Yes, but this is a study of class, not of misconceptions about it. Class-consciousness may usefully be studied only after objective class membership has been identified.

More valuable are the percentages of those objectively engaged in indicated occupations who placed themselves in "upper," "middle," or "working" (or "lower") classes, respectively: "large business": 13, 78, 7; "professional": 4, 81, 10; "small business": 3, 70, 24; "white collar": 2, 61, 35; "skilled manual": 2, 26, 71; "semi-skilled": 1, 14, 84; "unskilled": 0, 18, 82. Such figures are helpful, but one wonders about the level of questioning that has seven percent of persons in "large business" classifying themselves in the "working class." The ratings of respondents grouped by ob-

jective occupations on a five-point scale from "ultra-conservative" to "ultra-radical" are also interesting. Of all those in "business, professional and white-collar" occupations, 68 percent were "ultra-conservative or conservative" and 11 percent "radical or ultra-radical"; as against 28.5 and 38 percent, respectively, for all "urban manual workers." Semi-skilled manual workers were most radical, with 49 percent in the two radical categories and 21 in the two conservative ones.

Centers' subjective approach confuses objective class membership, *i.e.*, factual "life chances," with a medley of true and false consciousness of one's class position evoked when swift pollsters popped the question at respondents. He deduces that wealth and income are the principal criteria by which people identify the upper class; income, education and family position for the middle class; and, for the working class, "overwhelmingly status, function and role with respect to the economy of production and exchange." This sort of overlapping hodge-podge simply will not do! We badly need empirical studies of class and of true and false class-consciousness, carefully distinguished. Centers bases his study on the "common interests" of members of each class. These are, of course, crucial and a great deal more objective as power phenomena than he realizes; and because they are imperfectly apprehended by many people in our liberal society, they must be studied by procedures other than those here employed.

NATURALIST IN CHINA

ABBÉ DAVID'S DIARY. Translated and edited by Helen M. Fox (The Harvard University Press; \$5).

THIS is the first English translation of a portion of two diaries kept by a French Basque Jesuit who made two journeys into the interior of China and Mongolia between the years 1866 and 1869. His purpose was the collection of natural-history specimens; the diaries have never before been published except in the *Archives* of the Museum of Natural History in Paris; and they

make good reading even for those not interested in the flora and fauna of China.

For more than two centuries before Abbé David's time, Jesuit missionaries had been going to China and the earlier ones had created something of a scandal by unintentionally doing less to convert the Chinese to Christianity than they did to help Europe along the road to deism by popularizing the idea of China as a country ruled by sages in accordance with the dictates of Reason. But Abbé David ran no risk of falling into that error. Though he was obviously as much a child of Linnaeus as of Francis Xavier; though, indeed, he is rather on the defensive when he explains why, with the consent of his superiors, he is collecting specimens in Mongolia instead of converting the heathen, he was no convert to the wisdom of the East. He was obviously an intelligent man who, for all his calm faith, was no fanatic; but he took a very dim view of Chinese character, culture and government. The statement on the jacket of this volume that "China had been open to Europeans only twenty years when the Abbé made his journeys" is possibly misleading, since the reference is, of course, only to the interior, but the fact that Abbé David's travels did take him far from the big cities helps explain why his picture is by no means idealized.

Christian missionaries were established in many out of the way communities and there were a certain number of converts, but the other evidences of Occidental influence were confined to such items as the Chinese name for opium—which is translated as "European Smoke"—and the availability of indecent photographs for the European stereoscope. The picture of immemorial China which emerges is the familiar one, or at least one of the familiar ones—the exhausted land, frequently deforested and either a desert or a sea of mud; the government so inefficient and so essentially a complicated system of big and little schemes for graft that the Abbé can say, "It is an accepted and admitted fact that this country is just a vast gam-

ing table, where everyone makes as much as he can by using more ruses and skill than his adversary"; the people themselves often so poverty-stricken, so without energy or moral character, so stupefied by opium and the complete acceptance of custom, that they do nothing except cling precariously to a life at the very edge of starvation. Hoards of bandits large enough to call themselves "rebels" periodically destroy the cities which have managed to achieve some degree of prosperity; but the small bands that infest the country everywhere are for the most part so comically pusillanimous that it requires no more than the sight of a European weapon or even the faintest indication that the intended victims will put up some sort of resistance to send the desperadoes flying.

The Abbé's diaries are a business-like record of journeys made, difficulties met and results achieved, with occasional obiter dicta. There is no attempt to work them up into a treatise or even a travel book. But that is what gives them much of their interest, and the picture of the author which emerges is that of a simple and sincere—though possibly prejudiced—man who bore with great fortitude not only the dangers but, what may have been more difficult, the almost incredible discomforts of fatiguing journeys during which he had food hardly better than that of the most nearly destitute natives and endured the exposure and filth which travel in such a country entails. The dry remark, "One has to put up with much in China," is a masterpiece of understatement.

It is a pity that maps mentioned in the text are not given. There are, however, 16 well-reproduced, full-page pictures, including one of Père David's deer and another, which will mean more to the layman, of the giant panda which the Abbé was the first to introduce to Europe. According to the biographical introduction to the present volume, his collections of plants, birds and animals were among the most important ever sent back from the East. JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

OUR ORIENTAL ALLY

JAPAN: ENEMY OR ALLY? by W. MacMahon Ball (John Day; \$3).

DURING THE TWO YEARS he served as Great Britain's representative on the Allied Council for Japan, W. MacMahon Ball epitomized the sober, skeptical observer who felt the need to examine critically General MacArthur's extravagant claims of success. Despite the efforts of GHQ to deny the Allied Council access to all information inconsistent with these claims, the author was able to voice his doubts strongly enough to discomfit the US authorities; he was eventually replaced by a young man more skilled in the diplomacy of silence. In this book, as in his work on the Council, Ball has shown his love of candor and objectivity.

He is at his best when discussing the throttling of the Allied Council. His clear exposé of MacArthur's unprovoked attack upon that body will not be welcomed by those who would like to think of the US as blameless in the scuttling of international coöperation. Ball's description of the shocking performance of General Courtney Whitney at an early Council meeting is especially recommended to holders of that opinion.

The essence of Ball's message, however, is that the American assumption that Japan can now be treated as a trustworthy ally is mistaken. One wishes he had devoted less space to proving the fact that the assumption is the basis of our present policy, and more to the contention that Japan is still unregenerate. The assumption no longer needs proving, because it is obvious, and the need for examining its validity is the more pressing. Ball's analysis suffers slightly from the same weakness that crippled the Allied Council, a lack of complete, detailed information. Nevertheless, he quite accurately points out the areas where evidence of our failure and of Japanese insincerity and obstructionism is to be found and shows its seriousness.

His greatest weakness is not lack of proof, but failure to use and inter-

pret his best evidence—the successful campaign to choke off the once lusty, infant labor movement. Three years ago there was general agreement that this movement would provide the only secure foundation for our reform program. Ball regretfully notes that this foundation is now crumbling, but it is obvious from his conclusions that he fails to realize the implications of the fact that GHQ is allied with the Japanese reactionaries in the attack on labor. Instead of calling for a return to the original blueprint of strengthening Japan's indigenous democratic elements, he proposes that for the next twenty years we keep a watchful eye on the undemocratic groups which have retained control. What he fails to note is that in the meantime, while we are awaiting the conversion of the controlling cliques to the democratic cause, we are making an enemy of our only real ally, the Japanese worker.

LEE LAWRENCE

Lee Lawrence served in the occupation forces in Japan in both civilian and military capacities from September, 1945, through September, 1948. He was engaged primarily in investigating Japanese militaristic and nationalistic organizations.

THE AMIABLE "Q"

Q ANTHOLOGY. Compiled and edited by F. Brittain (Macmillan; \$3).

WHEN Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch was knocked down and killed by a jeep in 1944, he was a very important man. Why, it is not easy to say. Certainly not for his literary work alone—there is nothing in the present anthology to justify it, and nothing in the interminable novels, short stories, anthologies and books of criticism and verse which he turned out through fifty-seven years and which fill so much space in the card catalogues of public libraries.

Nothing is more interesting or instructive than the nature of certain reputations. I don't mean as cases for success manuals—although Quiller-Couch could certainly yield instruction in that direction—but the story of his career, properly told, could say much of the English academic and literary milieu during his lifetime. Accounting for Q's reputation in the Introduction

to this anthology, Brittain says, "His integrity was such that he became a very popular figure—an institution in himself." If that is the explanation, seldom has virtue been so rewarded.

This collection does give at least an impression of the man—of his opinions, of the tone of his mind, and (as many of these are occasional pieces) of the nature of his public function. His first reputation was as a writer of novels and short stories in the romantic tradition of Robert Louis Stevenson. During those years, under the pseudonym of "Q," he established himself as a legend, as "King of Fowey in a quiet way"—Fowey being the town in Cornwall where he lived and which figured in his writing. Later, at Cambridge, where he held the Edward VII Professorship of English Literature, the legend became that of the Grand Old Man, "old Q." The progress is recorded here in letters to the press, memorial addresses, university lectures, dedications, prefaces, and Latin verses to welcome a Lord Mayor. It is the career of an eminently "safe" man who offended no one, but a naturally amiable man, too, who (by his own account) "took our span of life as companionable, humorous, on the whole making for good."

Read now, Q's writing is dated. This is partly a quaintness of speech. In a lecture on Jargon, for example, he is himself guilty of the academic jargon—whimsical Latinisms and frequent appeals to the small-letter deities. But the mark of his time is particularly deep on his romantic attitude to literature, "this particular glory of our blood and State." He was a kind of patriot of literature, a dedicated champion of "Poetry, which all good men admit to be a beautiful and adorable thing, and some would have to be a holy thing."

But although this chivalrous passion may amuse, the important thing is that he took literature seriously, neither dismissing it as a pastime, nor depreciating his own position as a teacher. It is important not only as reflecting credit on Q, but in the history of contemporary criticism—particularly that

of the present critics at Cambridge. For he anticipated the direction of criticism when he emphasized the study of literature as the "refining of the critical judgment" instead of "the memorizing of much that passes for knowledge." He rescued literature from the "pedagogic mind" which "for avoidance of trouble tends all the while to dodge or obfuscate what is essential, piling up accidents and irrelevancies before it until its very face is hidden." And for that service he deserves no small honor.

JOHN FARRELLY

Crime and Punishment

Dead Lion, by John and Emory Bonett (Crime Club; \$2.25). Cyprian Druse, British literary lion, had more of the characteristics of the jackal in his private life, so there was motive aplenty for his sudden demise, listed by the police as accidental. Simon Crane, who had never seen his famous uncle, arrives from America on a trip to sign up some authors for his publishing firm just in time to be plummeted into the affair. While staying in Druse's flat, Simon discovers the six phonograph records, made by women in love with Druse, which play a decisive part in leading to the murderer. A clever plot, authentic background and interesting characters highly recommend this one.

Murder Miscellany.—Here are a few items that should make good hammock reading for the dog days: *Walk the Dark Street*, by William Krasner (Harper; \$2.50); *The Dark River*, by Philip Clark (Simon and Schuster; \$2); *Head of a Traveller*, by Nicholas Blake (Harper; \$2.50); *Where the Snow Was Red*, by Hugh Pentecost (Dodd, Mead; \$2.50); *Barren Harvest*, by C. M. Nelson (Crime Club; \$2.25); *The Case of the Famished Parson*, by George Bellairs (Macmillan; \$2.50); *Dog Eat Dog*, by Mary Collins (Scribner's; \$2.50); *He Didn't Mind Danger*, by Michael Gilbert (Harper; \$2.50); and *The Girl with a Hole in Her Head*, by Hampton Stone (Simon and Schuster; \$2).

E. H.

THEATRE: Opening Nights in Tel Aviv

TEL AVIV

THE FIRST OPENING I attended at the Habimah Theatre was a translation from the German, a Biblical play named "Saul." The author, who has lived in Israel for ten years without having learned Hebrew, informed me that his play should have taken six hours to perform but that it had been cut down to a playing time of two and a half hours.

The opening was attended by the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Chief of Police, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, etc. After the show there was a big party in the spacious foyer of the Habimah Theatre—which though still unfinished is one of the most pretentious edifices in the city—a party at which soft drinks and little cakes were served with a kind of sweet brandy and light wine for the heavy drinkers. (The country is now on an austerity diet.)

"Saul" is a flop, a stuffy, pseudo-literary affair. It was evident at once—even without knowing Hebrew—that the director had invented effects and specious bits of movement to give the play a semblance of action. At one point the leading lady rolled over on her back on the floor to indicate extreme discontent.

The play's failure is taken as something more than "another one of those things." It is held to be a lesson to Habimah. "Saul" is considered a reversion to the type of show the public no longer wants the company to do. The public now wants to take its Old Testament neat and demands that Habimah give authentic classics and relevant modern plays.

That naturalism as such is not what the public craves was made clear when it gave Habimah an ovation at the opening of its latest production, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Directed by Julius Gellner, a Czech-German, now a British subject, the production of Shakespeare's fantasy is prettier and

more lavish than anything Habimah has ever done.

The settings for the "Dream" are more attractive than any I have seen in a Shakespeare production at home, and its opulence would satisfy the taste of even our musical-comedy audiences. It is this somewhat candied splendor that distresses the intelligentsia in and out of the Habimah company. They feel that there is more luxurious display than poetry in the production.

It is true that Habimah's youngsters will not learn to act by indulging in such posturings and sweet ululations as the "Dream's" director demanded of them, but the performance had youthfulness, some good comedians, and it attempted to achieve one form of glamor.

There is a didactic puritanism in the social environment here that may be caused by the pressure of the country's problems. It enables an audience to sit patiently through—if not to enjoy—the Ohel's (Workers' Theatre) production of Theodor Herzl's "Solon in Lydia," an essay in dialogue on the moral need for earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow. Of course, the audience's reverence for Herzl, a Viennese journalist who in 1895 became the founder of political Zionism, may also account for its patience in the presence of a work that, though done with dignity, is dull from every point of view.

Typical of the younger generation's taste is "He Went to the Fields," a native work about the progress of a boy from his life on the *kibbutz* (collective farm) to his death during the war against the Arabs. The play is episodic, rough, swift and full of the brash vitality of pioneer youth. The Chamber Theatre—of which almost all the actors are ambitious beginners—does "He Went to the Fields" with an engaging crudity, energetic, honest, unselfconscious, humorous. Running

through the play is the main theme of selfless hard work, sacrifice and the plaint of a disturbed love life. Irwin Shaw, seated behind me at this performance, murmured, "Here's a stage full of Jewish characters, and not a word about anti-Semitism!" . . . It breathed an atmosphere that reminded

me of the American kids who, in the early thirties, often found expression in small workers' theatres and in some of the productions of our Federal Theatre Project. But the Chamber Theatre, as well as the others, has not only the sanction but the blessings of its Congress. HAROLD CLURMAN

ON THE AIR: Corwin's New Documentary

NORMAN CORWIN's documentary, "Citizen of the World," was broadcast on the CBS network on July 10. There has been time to get some perspective on the program, to balance one's enthusiasm against *a-priori* convictions, to check reactions volunteered by others, to temper the impulse to cheer merely because Corwin is back on the air again after an absence of two years.

There have been adverse comments, but before detailing them let's take a look at the show itself. Corwin set out to prove one point: that you and I are either citizens of the world or we are nothing at all. He tried to achieve his aim by showing that, willy-nilly, we all participate in world events, by humanizing those who work at the world-citizenship job full time, and by showing that our global representatives do get something done on our behalf.

Corwin had the full backing of the CBS documentary unit under Werner Michel and could call upon the resources of the United Nations radio division and the UN agencies throughout the world. That adds up to great riches. He wanted Lee J. Cobb for his narrator, and got him. There was a cast of ten, including some of the very best full-time radio talent. Alexander Semmler wrote, arranged and conducted special music. Did Corwin want one special ballad as a "spot"? He got Oscar Brand for the job. Did he need recordings? The UN got them for him—in Hawaii, Haiti and Bulgaria, Rhodes and England and France. Did he want to do a little trick by putting on a duet sung by one girl in Stockholm and another in Sydney? The state broadcasting systems of

Sweden and Australia were eager to oblige.

Some of the friendly critics say that, for all the resources, the project did not succeed. There are three principal criticisms: (1) it brought to the air no new techniques of the type we have come to expect from Corwin; (2) it was too intellectual, not earthy enough; (3) it was formless, a synthesis of material arbitrarily chosen because the author happened to fish them out of a vast grab-bag.

The charge of failure to invent seems to me frivolous. The technique was a reprise of all of the best that Corwin has used on the air in the past. But there were no pyrotechnics because the message was of supreme importance.

That message is intellectual. The language was simple enough, clear enough, throughout. It was spoken, and dramatized, with dignity—as it should have been. If "intellectual" is taken to mean a clear avoidance of the slapstick approach and belly laughs, and failure to resort to the popularization that feels communication is possible only out of the side of the mouth, then Corwin is certainly guilty. But who would claim that gag writers are essential to such a program?

The critic who holds that Corwin was too diffuse, too synthetic, is on somewhat firmer ground, but even here I do not feel that the objection is sound enough to invalidate the great good accomplished. Corwin used the broadest canvas, the globe.

The problem was not restricted to a single phase of world tribulation—

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hunger, poverty, disease, erosion or war. There have been full-hour broad-
casts on these themes, and they seemed
almost overwhelming. But here the
author tackled all of them, mankind's
"Big Five," and also touched on some
"satellites" like ignorance, superstition
and mistrust—and the fact that the
atom bomb exists.

If the result seemed diffuse, the
blame is not to be placed on the au-
thor but on the multiplicity and var-
iety of the world's problems. And
Corwin's illustrations are as pertinent
as any someone else might have chosen.

There was nothing "synthetic" about
the farmer reassured at the end that
world citizenship pays off in a 20-
percent increase in crop yield because
of contour plowing. Nor was there
anything artificial about the pregnant
young woman being assured that she
"is not creating life only to have it
starved, impoverished or slaughtered."
Those are among the aims of the
United Nations, among the jobs fac-
ing the world citizen. That's what Cor-
win set out to tell us in that docu-
mentary. He did it magnificently.

SAUL CARSON

MOVIES: Lost Generation

"SO WE BEAT ON, boats against the
current, borne back ceaselessly into the
past." As college boys, a lot of us used
to quote that line, the closing sentence
of *The Great Gatsby*. None of us
knew quite what it meant, but it
sounded more meaningful to us than
any single line printed since the death
of Shakespeare. It fitted a mood of
melancholic self-disgust stemming
partly from our own youth, but also
reflecting the lackluster excesses and
revulsions of the older generation to
which F. Scott Fitzgerald belonged.

Like all his books, *The Great Gats-
by* was Fitzgerald's attempt to write
an obituary for his decade and thus,
perhaps, to lay its ghost. But he did
not live to get the words quite right,
and though the answer may have been
in Jay Gatsby, the book never worked
very well as a key.

Now they have made it into a mov-
ie, a quite literal transposition that
manages to lose the whole book.
Gatsby, that figure of a self-destroyed
man who had stolen even his illusions,
appears as an example of young
American resourcefulness, trim and
ready for anything, and tripped up
only because he didn't realize that nice
people also play dirty. As Alan Ladd
acts him, a little tough, a little boy-
ish, quite definitely noble, he is a man
to pity. But who had the resources or
the effrontery to pity Gatsby?

The times have changed, and today
we are lost in different ways. But the
color of *Gatsby* could have been re-
captured by a company that understood
his peculiar innocence, the naïveté of
a man who kills himself and then
starts planning a honeymoon.

Still, as pictures go, "The Great
Gatsby" is good. The brittle, inconse-
quential plot makes a clearly defined
scenario and Betty Field, Ruth Hussey,
MacDonald Carey and Howard Da
Silva play well with Ladd in what they
understand to be a morbid melodrama
of Long Island society. The monstrous
spectacles of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg glar-
ing over the garbage dumps don't
seem to mean much now, but the story
has been given a small subsidiary
happy ending. What you lose one
way, you gain another.

There hasn't been a picture in
years as somber as "House of Stran-
gers." It is "King Lear" in Little Italy,
with Edward G. Robinson brought to
bay by a quartet of heavy-visaged,
serpent-toothed sons. The picture tells,
with considerable authority, the tale
of an ambitious Italian immigrant
barber who becomes the banker for
his pushcart compatriots and, mixing
paternalism with an ability to figure
interest in his head, amasses a con-
siderable fortune. The banking house
of Monetti is to belong to the boys

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(Richard Conte, Luther Adler, Paul Valentine and Efrem Zimbalist Jr.), but meanwhile they are to lick the old man's boots and snarl in their cages. All except Conte, that is, who goes his independent way in the not unfamiliar role of pure-hearted shy-ster (see John Garfield in "Force of Evil"), takes a jail rap for the old man and ends up battling for his life against his poisonous brothers.

The film is as predictable as marinara sauce and the brothers spend an excessive amount of time convincing one another of their implacable Italian temperaments, but the characterizations are striking and there is some good, moody detail. Only the ending is really specious—a last-curtain reprieve from the furies that was probably not in Jerome Weidman's original novel.

Unwisely, as it turns out, the British have tried to present a skittish view of sex in "Once Upon a Dream." The picture is built on the Admirable Crichton armature and contains, in addition to the heroine's disturbing dream romance, a whimsical contretemps at the annual parish flower show. It was distressing to find the beautiful and intelligent Googie Withers engaged in this pallid romp.

No cautious reviewer is going to come right out and say that "The Big Steal" is a ludicrous miscarriage of an adventure picture, because there is just an outside chance that RKO-Radio meant it that way.

What seems to be happening on the screen is a wooden, implausible, humorless melodrama in which Robert Mitchum and Jane Greer are chased by William Bendix through long stretches of Mexican scenery. Bendix is shown to be a man of utter desperation, but his performance as a bloodhound is impaired by extreme slowness of wit and an inability to keep clear of his own feet. As a consequence, Mitchum and Miss Greer must constantly slow down to keep him in the race, and the effect is of a sprint through molasses.

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